

NEWS RELEASE

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Central Illinois Federal Grand Jury Charges Texas Man with Online Sexual Enticement of a Child

Rock Island, IL - Rodger A. Heaton, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois, announced that John Wayne Malone, age 40, of Pittsburgh, Texas, was charged by a federal grand jury with sexual exploitation of a child and receiving child pornography. The indictment also seeks criminal forfeiture of property containing child pornography or which was used to commit or promote distribution of child pornography. The indictment alleges that on July 3, 2005, Malone enticed a minor to engage in sexually explicit conduct by computer and cellular telephone.

The affidavit filed in support of a criminal complaint filed June 7, 2006, alleges Malone engaged in Internet chats with a 14-year-old girl through instant messaging communications via an online game known as Everquest.

U.S. Attorney Heaton stated, "Technology provides child predators with more sophisticated and sinister methods, but the objective remains unchanged: to lure innocent children and exploit their vulnerability. This case underscores again that there are predators who will go wherever children are to pursue them. Law enforcement and parents must remain vigilant to protect our children, whether on the playground or on the Internet."

If convicted of sexual exploitation of a child, the mandatory minimum penalty is 15 years in prison to 30 years imprisonment. For receiving child pornography, the mandatory minimum statutory penalty is five years in prison to 20 years imprisonment. Both offenses carry fines of up to \$250,000.

The charges are the result of an investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Moline, Illinois Police Department, and the Pittsburg, Texas Police Department. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew J. Cannon.

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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